

THE CATHOLIC ART QUARTERLY



1955·EASTER·VOL·XVIII·NO2

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WORDS AND ICONS

"A word is not merely a sign to convey a meaning. It is a living thing, embodying spirit. . . . When a word decays, it is not merely that we become uncertain of each other's meaning. One of the forms that compose our life has perished. . . . A light has been extinguished and our intellectual day made darker. To restore to its original meaning a word that is being destroyed by careless use is a service to the whole of human life." Romano Guardini in *The Last Things*, p. 101.

The above words are true; they are timely; they need to be spoken, understood and acted upon. May we not apply them to our own pressing problem, the restoration to their original meanings of material images, icons, which are but words of another kind?

For an icon also is not merely a sign to convey an idea. An icon of Our Lady, for example, is not only so much stone, plaster, wood, or paint arranged in such a way as to direct our attention to the idea of Our Lady, and help us to hold our mind to that idea. It is much more than that. An icon is a living thing; it is the embodiment, the materialization of a spiritual principle. When a painter makes a figure of Our Lady, it is *Our Lady in paint*. It is not merely paint so arranged as to make an impression on the physical eye similar to the impression that she herself might have made had we been there to see.

In other words, a human being is composed of form and matter, a spirit incarnated in a body of flesh and blood, and Our Lady was no exception. Her body was the cause of her appearance, but her spirit was the cause of her significance. If, then, an artist succeeds in informing a piece of material, a stone, or some paint, with her intelligible principle — and that is what he does when he makes an icon — he will have produced something which suggests her significance, but which has little sensible resemblance. He will have made "Our Lady in paint." Obviously, an artist cannot

know *all* about Our Lady's soul, but the more he knows, the better his icon will be.

It is thus that true images instruct and inform our minds. Most of our thinking is done in terms of interior images, rather than in terms of concepts. If the material images our eyes see are false, that falsity will be reflected within. If our mental images are false, our religious thinking will necessarily be false. This places an almost intolerable burden of responsibility on the makers of icons, and explains why, under the Old Law as among various Christian sects today, the use of any religious image is forbidden.

When an iconographic type decays, it is not merely that we become uncertain of its meaning. One of the forms that compose our intellectual life has perished. A light has been extinguished and our intellectual day has been made darker. Our minds — made for truth — have suffered a partial paralysis. It is unnecessary to insist here on the gravity of this menace to Faith. No one can tell how much of our modern secularism and inability to accept the Faith which our fathers found so easy, is thus to be laid at the doors of the makers of images. May God have mercy upon us if we have been guilty of corrupting divine images.

To restore to its original meaning and perfection, an iconographic type that is being destroyed by abuse, is to render service to the whole of human life. Let us rejoice that this is our task, and go forward into it with courage and humility.

THOMAS DERRICK

On November 18, 1954, Thomas Derrick died at his home in England in his seventieth year. His life and work as a preëminent Catholic artist, as well as his notable interest in and kindness to the Catholic Art Quarterly, demand some notice here, as well as a word of thanksgiving. Our Christmas issue was already in the press when news of his death reached us.

Of unsubstantiated eulogies we read enough. In this notice of Mr. Derrick as an artist, we will try to give the reader not only a correct appreciation of his artistic status, but also to demonstrate, as far as that is possible, why such a judgment is valid.

By Graham Carey

Thomas Derrick lived and worked in the spirit of the English Traditionalists. The personality that most profoundly influenced him was that of William Richard Inge, to whom he always referred as "my master," and whose aphorisms he was never tired of repeating. For the generation in which young Thomas grew up, Inge was the prophet and guide of the forces which had been set in motion earlier by John Ruskin and William Morris. Among his friends were such men as Edouard Belloc, Gilbert Chesterton, Randolph Coomaraswamy, and Ernest William Tristram. When he set about to learn penmanship, it was Edward Johnston who taught him, and when he made his submission to the Church, it was Father Vincent McNabb who received him.

In his work, his traditionalism manifests itself in technical ways, as in his use of anachronism. Like any artist unaffected by the innovations of the Renaissance, the idea he is concerned to express is visualized as taking place under contemporary conditions. This is shown in the two drawings illustrating the parable of the Unjust Steward on pages 40 and 41, where the rich man and his yokel appear in modern dress. Much of Derrick's artistic force is due to his use of this ancient convention which consists in dressing up the ageless theme in the trappings of the freshly experienced present moment. Nothing is sadder than an artist's inaccurate specula-

tions as to the *mores* of a time he never lived in and cannot know.

So also with perspective. Derrick knows quite as much as most of us about vanishing points and picture planes, but he feels free to ignore what is not to his purpose, and adopts a convention that is very close to the canon of the Egyptians. He is entirely free from the "evolutionary" compulsions that we *must* use a certain means merely because it has been invented and we have learned how to do so.

Like all true Traditionalists he was thoroughly contemporary. Much as he loved the best work of the Middle Ages, and strongly as he condemned certain accepted phases of modern English life, he was no nostalgic medievalist. He would have found himself at home with the craftsmen of the time of the Crusades, as no mere medievalist could. Can we imagine Bunthorne at the court of Charlemagne? He would have had a poor time. Thomas Derrick would have been right in his element in those Caroline workshops, as he was in what was left of them in the rural England of his own day. When he said he liked "chaps," he meant that he was as comfortable and happy in the presence of ordinary people who knew and loved their jobs, as he was wretchedly uncomfortable in the presence of "the high art wallahs" and the pretentiousness of "aesthetic people" in general.

He was most widely known for his dry brush drawings in the English press. He produced these for such periodicals as *The*

London Mercury, The Bookman, Time and Tide, Everyman, The Sunday Express, G. K.'s Weekly, Punch and even the *London Tablet*. So far, some three hundred of these vigorous and varied drawings have been listed. Many were humorous, and with these the point of the joke was always in the drawing itself, never in the caption. More were political, though unlike most other political cartoonists, he was concerned neither with personalities nor with petty ephemeral incidents, but with long term historic trends with which he dealt freshly and vigorously. These works really cannot be called political unless we are willing to understand the word in its full Greek sense. He often did not scruple to turn his satiric wit on the lords of the press themselves, and therefore reaped quite a little crop of rejections. Before his death, he was considering the publication of a book of drawings to be entitled "Rejected by Punch." Perhaps the press drawings should be called illuminations rather than cartoons, for illumination of the mind was both their end and their method. On pages 39 and 42, we are reproducing two of the more quiet and sober of these drawings, one published during the Second World War, and one on the occasion of the Princess Elizabeth's wedding.

But he was not merely a cartoonist. Primarily, he was a painter, a portraitist. For this work he preferred tempera, but he could do anything with paint, whether restoring old work or producing new. He also designed and oversaw the execution of a large number of stained glass windows. He illustrated humorous books for the Shakespeare Head Press. He designed books of his own without type, such as *The Prodigal Son and Other Parables* and the *Nine Muses*, examples of which are reproduced on pages 47 and 48. He made some

wood engravings, and many wood cuts notably those illustrating Dent's quarto edition of *Everyman*, two of which are shown on pages 44 and 45. Perhaps the reader will not object to being reminded that wood engraving is made on the end grain of a piece of wood with a graver, whereas a wood cut is made on the side grain of a piece of wood with a knife.

His desire to have his family grow up in the normal atmosphere of the countryside, and his desire to be with them, kept him away from London, and kept him relatively unknown. His family meant even more to him than his profession to which he gave himself so unsparingly, and he sometimes referred to it as his "masterpiece." So from Berkshire farmhouses, difficult of access and ill-equipped for the sort of work that occupied him, flowed forth the stream of works of such varied techniques, which were the source of income for his family of which he was so proud.

The patience and laboriousness of his methods and the incredible amount of toil that went into the perfection of even the slightest drawings would be unbelievable to anyone who had not seen him at work. As his daughter Ruth wrote: "Drawing which seem to be an easy outpouring of inspiration were often born in great labor through the hours of the night, in obedience to the printing presses which must not be kept waiting."* Yes, indeed, but she might have added, chiefly in obedience to an incorrigible perfectionism which no filial persuasions had any effect upon, until he himself knew that the work was as good as he could make it.

The originals of the brush drawings reproduced on pages 47 and 48 are made four on one folio sheet. There is no ev

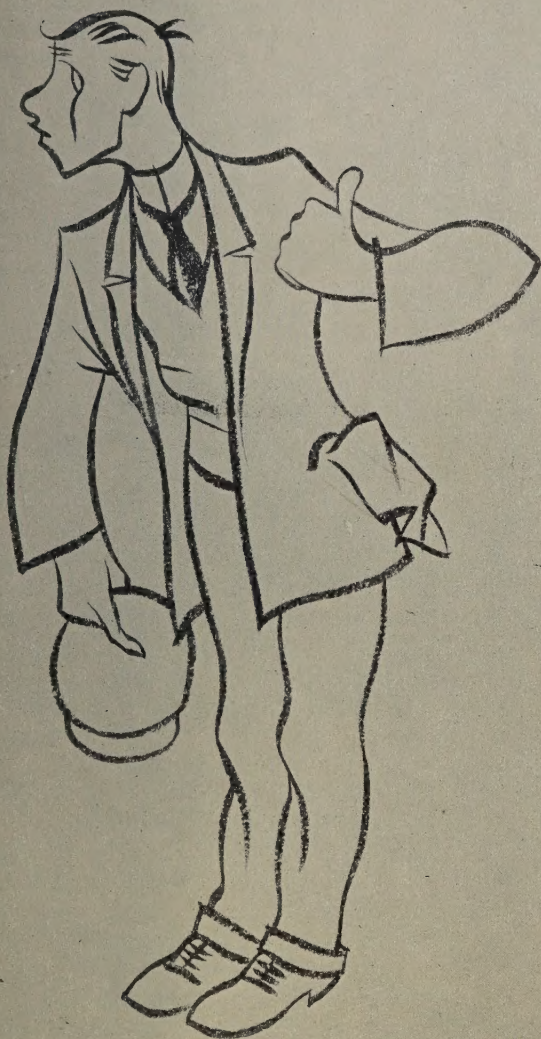
*This and the following quotations are from a letter from Mr. Derrick's daughter, Ruth.

Opposite: The presence of the four national patrons, their eyes on the altar, makes it impossible to regard this wedding of Princess Elizabeth as a mere social event. A temporal happening acquires eternal significance. There is no attempt to individualize the faces, the four holy personalities being known by their symbolic accoutrements.





And the same was accused unto him
that he had wasted his goods.



from the

PARABLE OF THE UNJUST STEWARD

Notice the economy of means. The rich man's chair could not be more abstract, yet it tells its part of the story. Regard only the feet, or the hands, and see how, even in isolation, these parts tell the story: a chorus of voices, each saying the same truth in its own way.



RESURRECTION

A Drawing by

All the elements of design support each other to give the total effect: God's goodness and man's folly, i.e., youth and age, living tree and dead one, gentle lamb and ruined house, sun and rain clouds, hope and calamity.

once of any preliminary pencil sketching, erasures, no tracing, and no retouching with Chinese white. When he made a mistake, he either left it there for all the world to see, or he made all four drawings over again on a fresh sheet.

He was extraordinarily sensitive to beauty, seeing glory in things and in people where to most of us it was quite unsuspected. In Charles Williams' sense of that word, he was a true Romantic, being possessed of the unspoiled eye of the child, the poet, or the unfallen Adam. He could see the paradisaical splendor which creatures owe to their mere creaturehood, and which we could see in all creatures were we still in Eden.

He had a good sound philosophy of life and art, but he was not a philosopher. His absorbing interests were in people and in things rather than in ideas. By his inner forces he was not driven to *know*, but to *love* his fellow man and make him useful things. For his productive purposes he had earned all the theoretical knowledge he needed from Lethaby, and he felt no itch either to add to it or to systematize it. Others have theorized better than he, but no modern Catholic has approached him as a graphic artist.

"He used often to refer to his work as 'adding to the world's litter'; (his patron saint, I understand, used a comparable expression with regard to the *Summa*)." This was rather a reflection on the work of others than on his own, for it was his master, Lethaby, who first defined art as "the right making of what needs making," and surely the pupil must have known that the things he made were necessary, and that he made them with consummate skill.

His Catholicism is evident in the power with which he treats Christian themes. We have a crucifix he carved with intense devotion, telling the story of the love of God by its singleness of purpose; the beauty of the matter, the beauty of the form and the beauty of the truth all united:



Drawing presented by Thomas Derrick to Ananda Coomaraswamy on the latter's 70th birthday

the beauty of the love containing the ugliness of the pain. Mere representation of human pain did not satisfy him; he strove to portray the reign of Divine love from the cross."

But his Catholicism shows also in the very quality of his thinking in a mode rare among cradle Catholics. His treatment of the feminine figure, for example, is a marvelous balance between the extreme of Manicheanism on the one hand, with its terror of the body, and the more common allurements of sensuality on the other. We see this in the figures of the Muses of Comedy and the Dance, where he achieves a balance as Christian as it is rare, intensely sensitive to beauty and yet ascetic. "The restraint and care over essentials that characterize the altar, also characterize his drawings."

Langdon Warner, in his last book, *The Enduring Art of Japan* (p. 87), writes as follows: "The Oriental craftsman is . . . unconscious of any standard of judgment on his work of art other than that its subject must be obvious at first sight and, secondarily, that he must give you his uttermost technical skill." Judged by this



GOD SPEAKETH:

Drowned in sin, they know me not for their God;
In worldly riches is all their mind. . . .



EVERYMAN:

Have mercy on me, God most mighty;
And stand by me, thou Mother and Maid, holy Mary.

criterion, the work of Thomas Derrick must rank high indeed. His speech was lucid, and his means superlatively skillful.

One more quotation from his daughter, in conclusion: "Through his sense of living in a strange land he achieves a strength of meaning, and yet at the same time he can sing the song of the Lord in beauty of line and design, and in beauty of truth as well, finding joy even in exile."

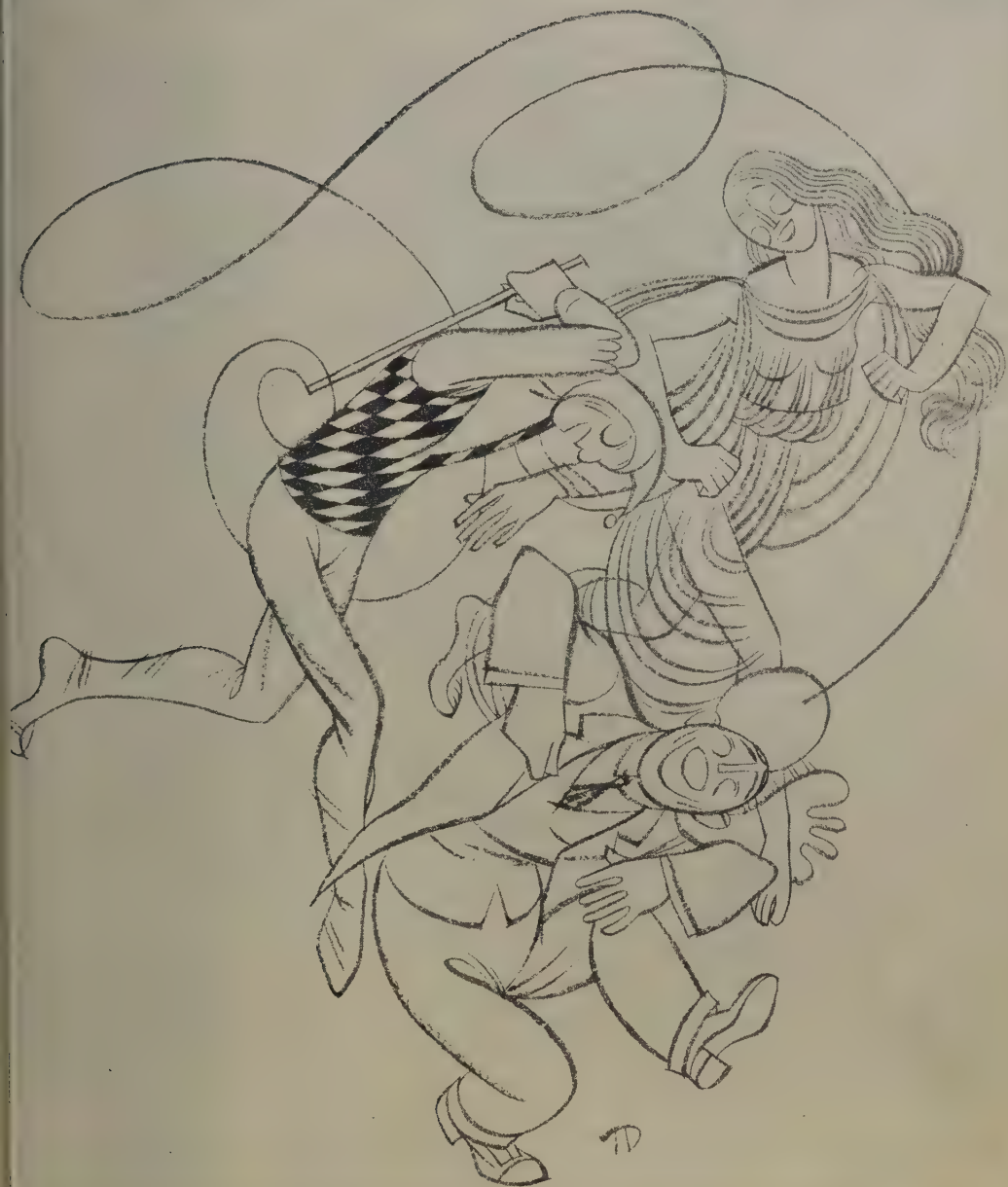
Thomas Derrick was dazzled not only by the beauty of his fellow mortals — beauty often completely invisible to others — but also to their hidden goodness. This was the source of his love for "chaps,"

ordinary people. He found love in his heart, and charitable words on his tongue even for the highbrow type of artist, but his special affection was for Everyman. In spite of his own amazing skills and talents it was as an example of Everyman — the humble and disciplined workman — that he thought of himself. Here at the end of this notice, we print his own image of Everyman beside his grave, supported by the only friends who can accompany him into the Next World — his Education and his Good Deeds. In his case, these ladies must have proved solid and reliable sister companions.



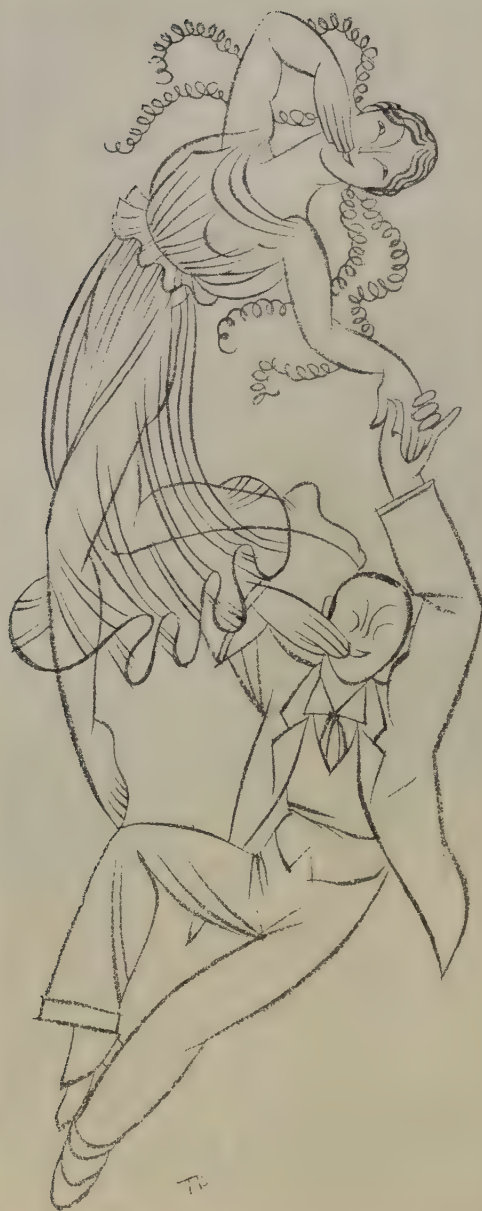
Let the faithful soul take care that while contemplating an image, the senses be not absorbed by it, whether that image is material or in the imagination, of beautiful workmanship or of rich adornment, and whether the devotion it excites is spiritual or sensible. Let him not regard these outward accidents or dwell upon them, but venerate the image as the Church commands, and lift up his mind at once from the material image to that which it represents, with the sweetness and joy of the will resting on God.

St. John of the Cross: *Ascent of Mt. Carmel*



from THE NINE MUSES

Thalia, Muse of Comedy. Compare the rhythmic use of line here, suggesting rumpus, with that on p. 48, suggesting a dance of the order of the minuet. Notice that the Muse's foot is as large as the man's. The artist neglects fashionable feminine conventions, and produces a clean, fresh, and charming abstraction.



from THE NINE MUSES

Terpsichore, Muse of Dancing. We see here why John Howard Benson called Derrick "the greatest master of the brush outside the Orient." Have we any reason to suppose that Giotto, with his O, had a more complete manual control of his brush?

BISHOP SPARROW HAWK'S TUSK STAFF

Greenland is not a part of the European continent but of the North American. Its discovery about the year 900 and its colonization a century later, both by Icelanders, was the discovery and the colonization of America by Europeans. As the Icelanders were converted to Christianity at the very end of the 10th century, the year 1000 saw the arrival in Greenland of Leif Erikson, accompanied by missionaries who brought with them King St. Olaf's proclamation that henceforth all his subjects were to be Catholics.

For five hundred years a community estimated at over three thousand souls, almost a thousand miles from their mother colony, and that colony Iceland on the fringe of the European world, maintained themselves as farmers in the treeless wastes of arctic Greenland. For the first century or so they may even be said to have prospered. Scattered along the 180 miles of the western coast, wherever a fjord gave a little shelter, there were about 280 farms. There were sixteen parish churches and two Benedictine establishments, one for monks and one for nuns. There was, at first, a rather regular trade with Iceland and Norway, the exports being "tusk-ware," i.e., walrus and narwhal ivory, ropes of walrus hide, ox hides, woolen cloth, white and blue fox skins, seal skins, polar bear skins, live polar bears, white falcons, and even a little butter and cheese. The imports were the basic necessities of civilized life: wood, iron, wheat, and so forth. In 1126 the first bishop arrived, and later his cathedral church was built at Gardar, dedicated to St. Nicholas, the patron of sea-farers. Later, six bishops were buried at the east end of this church.

All through the north of Europe the winters of the 14th century were exceptionally bitter. To the Greenlanders, who were living beyond the limits that nature had set for the ordered and civilized Euro-

pean life that they were heroically struggling to maintain, this increased cold must have been crucial. In addition, the hostility of the Eskimos increased, and ships from home grew fewer and less dependable. The ground ice rose so high that the bodies of the dead buried in the 14th century have remained frozen down to our own days. In 1932 Danish archeologists carried out excavations at Gardar and elsewhere. They found the bodies of men and women dressed in the fashion of the 14th century, liripipe hoods and all, which the paintings and sculptures of Europe have made so familiar to us. These homespun woolen garments are of great interest not only in their testimony of the inflexible will of the colonists to remain Europeans, not to "go native," to maintain even the externals of the culture of Christendom; but also because they—gowns, caps, hoods, coat-hardies, and hose,—have come down to us from the medieval time nowhere else. There are plenty of priestly vestments and royal robes in the great collections and treasuries of Europe, but nowhere else can we see the actual clothing of ordinary medieval farmers and farm wives.

Among the bodies exhumed was that of a large man with a gold ring on the ring finger of his right hand, and in that hand a staff of ash wood shod with an iron ferule and topped with an ivory scroll in the manner of the 13th century. (See page 54.) It is not known which of the recorded Bishops of Greenland this was, but it is quite possible that the body was that of Jon Arnason Smyrill, John son of Arna nicknamed the Sparrow Hawk, who died in 1209. Bishop Jon was a great friend of Bishop Paul of Skalholt in Iceland, who had in his household a sculptress famous for her work in ivory, named Margaret the Skillful. Whether this crozier is the work of an Iclander at the beginning of the 13th century, or of a Greenlander some-

what later, it is equally marvellous. That the sculptural feeling of a particular epoch could travel so far is as incredible as that it could travel so rapidly from its original source. The carving is today in the Medieval Collection of the National Museum at Copenhagen.

The slow encroachment of the glacier, the attacks of the Eskimos, the increasing difficulties of maintaining a European husbandry in such a frozen waste, the heart-break of hope continually deferred of seeing ships from home, the increase of rickets and other deficiency diseases, close the story of the Greenland Settlement. There is a letter written by the Pope in 1492 in which he states that for the past eighty years no ship has been known to have re-

turned from Greenland. The last priest had said Mass there a hundred years before, and once a year it was the custom of these priestless people to expose and venerate the corporal upon which the Body of Christ had lain. Breadless, wineless, priestless, Massless, these poor folk, exiles on the uttermost shores of the known world, still clung to their Faith.

About 1540 a traveller known as John Greenlander reported that the last of the colony had perished. On the rocky shore he had found the frozen body of a man, in homespun hood and surcoat, lying with his iron knife beside him, bent and nearly worn away. Greenland had returned to the Stone Age. The Christian adventure was over.

WORKSHOP ON ART IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

JUNE 10-21, 1955

In its fourth consecutive workshop on art, the Catholic University of America is bringing together professionally competent men and women, members of the Catholic Art Association, to help special teachers of art as well as classroom teachers — elementary school, high school, and college — to become more keenly aware of what restoring the arts to Christ really implies.

The morning sessions will be highlighted by the following lectures: "The Arts in Christian Schooling," Sister Mary Nona, O.P.; "The Christian Philosophy of Art," Mr. Graham Carey; "Values in Children's Drawings and Paintings," Mr. Viktor Lowenfeld; "Developing Attitudes and Appreciations through Study of Works of Art," Sister M. Esther, S.P.; "Art in the Christo-centric Home," Mrs. Alfred Berger; "Specialized Training for Tomorrow's Professional Artists," Sister Augusta, S.C.; "Professional Opportunities for Christian Students and Artists," Miss Katharine B. Neilson; "The Importance of Personal and Artistic Integrity," Miss Adé de Bethune.

Seminars scheduled for each afternoon will be conducted by Sister Marie Pierre, C.S.J., on crafts for home and school; by Sister Esther, S.P., on art appreciation; by William V. Cladek on techniques of graphic arts for planning school papers and yearbooks; by Mr. Aldo Tambellini on painters and religious images; by Sister Mary Joanne, S.N.D., on techniques of drawing and painting.

Lectures, discussions, and exhibitions of student work are planned to provide opportunities for parents, teachers, and artists to share experiences, to work coöperatively, and to acquire the knowledge and the skills basic to successful training in the arts. Special attention will be given to the Course of Study in Art prepared by the Catholic Art Association.

The preliminary program for the Workshop on Art and the application form are available from the Director of Workshops, The Catholic University of America, Washington 17, D.C.

A CONTEMPORARY CRUCIFIX

A really perfect work of art must always have been regarded as an end in itself by its maker, as well as a means to an end by its user. That is to say, that, while fulfilling its function, it must also have been produced by someone who respected its nature as an artificial object with requirements of its own. A major artistic problem is posed today by the extreme difficulty of finding contemporary work that meets both requirements. For, of necessity, the product of the commercial house cannot be expected by its makers to be regarded as an end in itself, and therefore it lacks the qualities of perfection that only love can give it. And the product of the average studio — the "art world" being informed by a sadly deficient aesthetic philosophy — is almost always lacking in adjustment to use and function. Those who quite frankly interest themselves in "the arts of beauty" to the neglect of "the arts of use" can hardly be expected to be keenly aware of artifacts as tools in the practical hands of their neighbors.

The crucifix illustrated on page 53 comes much closer to fulfilling both these requirements than the great majority of contemporary crucifixes. It is well worthy of our serious attention. It is the work of Jean Lambert-Rucki, a Polish artist, long resident in Paris. Unlike much of this artist's work, it follows the general type with which we have been familiar since the Reformation, and therefore need not distress the most conservative user because of the unfamiliarity of its conception. It thus fully meets the requirements, mentioned above, of use. It is conceived as a definite means to a practical end.

Again, it is well imagined as to its materials. The shape is not only worked out in terms of wax — the instrumental material — but also in terms of the final material, bronze. To a great extent the wax has been manipulated with the kinds of

tools which make possible the subsequent finishing of the metal with simple files and scrapers — the sort of instruments that can give bronze the polished surface that it needs if it is to express its metallic nature.

Furthermore, these surfaces, and their relationships to each other, as well as the masses and their interrelations, are pleasing in a way that suggests that they have a true imaginative origin. They are the result of the fact that the artist's tools, and the hands that hold them, have been guided by a healthily functioning mind, and borrow from that mind some of its inner order. In other words, the work has also a formal beauty.

The figure shows enough anatomical accuracy for its purpose, without insisting on a naturalism that would contradict the functional, technical, and formal facts. No humanly contrived image can go very far toward expressing the nature of the divine self-sacrifice; but this one, with its sensitive respect for the dignity of suffering, is far less inadequate than most.

* * *

If I were writing this little notice for one of the secular art magazines, I would stop there. But these words are for the readers of the *Catholic Art Quarterly* who are, or should be, vitally interested in understanding the difference between sacred art and secular, as a means to the restoration of the former. For their benefit, I must, therefore, go on. I am convinced that our artist has failed to understand this distinction, and is the victim of secular ideas of art which he has breathed in with the secular air around him. He is certainly not to be blamed for this, for most of us are still subject to the same confusion, and all of us have spent much of our lives in it. What distinguishes M. Lambert-Rucki from us, members of the Catholic Art Association, is not his inability to throw off secular

artistic errors, but his greater artistic gifts. If he could see the "art world" through the eyes of those who have learned to see through it—with the eyes of a Philip Hagreen, a Desmond Chute, a Thomas Derrick, a Walter Shewring, or an Eric Gill—his artistic achievements would be far beyond the reach of any criticism of ours.

I will notice two facts about this crucifix which show that the artist has not yet learned to see the "art world" as they have done.

1) To the man of a sacred culture, the personality of the artist is of minor importance. To the man of the secular "art world," the personality of the maker comes close to being the artifact's most important aspect. The inordinate enthusiasm for indications of the artist's personality in his work, Mr. C. S. Lewis has called "The Personal Heresy."

To the admirer of Picasso, a poster, for example, designed by that artist is an object of reverence, in spite of the facts that the composition may be poor, the drawing pathetic, and the lettering atrocious. It is a Picasso, and that is its value. It is from the hand of that master. Criticism is disarmed in advance.

But the admirer of Shakespeare is not surprised to learn that the poet thought so little of signatures and the approval of posterity, that he did not even keep copies of his plays, but leaving them in tattered actors' script, went home, toward the end of his life, to Warwickshire to grow apples.

In the case of divine images, the man of sacred culture feels an especial impropriety at the intrusion of the artistic ego in the form of the signature. The artist who "signs" a crucifix confesses in so doing that he regards the image primarily as an object of aesthetic or commercial interest. To the Christian, a crucifix is a symbol of the major fact of history, the redemptive act of supreme humility, self-abnegation, and love. Nevertheless, on this crucifix, along the side of the loin cloth, the artist

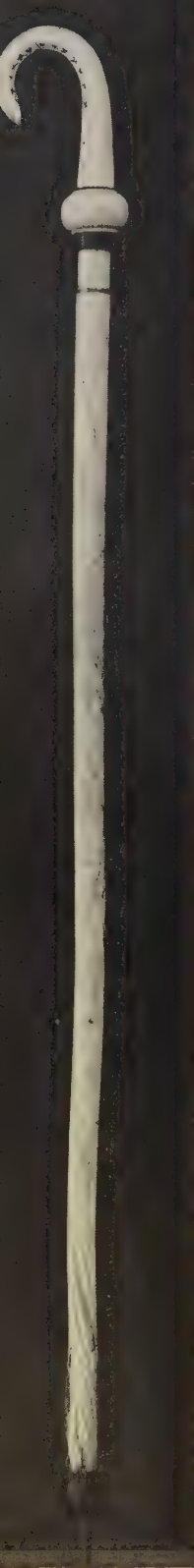
has written his name in large letters.

2) The second point is not quite so easy for the person of secular culture to grasp. To the man of sacred culture, art is always a process of making one object with the *meaning* of another object; in other words, art is analogical or symbolic. To the man of secular culture, art is the giving to one object the *appearance* of another object and art is either naturalistic or derivative. This distinction holds whether the artifact concerned is a chair or an epic poem.

The man of sacred mentality concerns himself with principles and essences, whereas the secular man deals with effects. Whether he is making a teapot or an icon, a joke or cathedral, the traditional artist conceives of his work as the giving to a new thing an existence in its own right. He is informing a new piece of matter with an idea, bringing about an original hylomorphic union, establishing a fresh reality, a being, the appearance of which will be the effect of its essence, and can, therefore, be largely ignored. If the substance is right, the shadow can be allowed to take care of itself.

But the secularist has another view. With him, the resemblance between his artifact and that for which it stands, is one of appearances. Sheraton made good chairs, so I will reproduce a Sheraton chair, make something that *looks* like a Sheraton chair, for not being Sheraton, I can make a Sheraton chair only by derivation. Paul Revere made good teapots, the Russians painted good icons, the medieval craftsmen built good cathedrals. We are not Russians nor medieval masons but we can copy the surfaces of these things, the aesthetic surfaces, and if we copy well enough we hope to achieve in our new work the fine effects of the old. And, obviously, as it is appearance that matters, it is a waste of time to labor over and perfect those parts of the work that will never appear. I need not here give examples of this characteristic of secular work—





Crozier (tusk-staff)
from the
treasure store of
Roskilde Cathedral, Denmark
now in the
National Museum
at Copenhagen.
Crook
of walrus ivory;
staff of
narwhal ivory.
Reproduced by
courtesy of the
Museum authorities.

Head of crozier
carved in walrus
ivory.
Formerly the
official staff of
one of the bishops
of medieval
Greenland.
Reproduced by
courtesy of the
Curator of the
Danish Collections
in the National
Museum of
Copenhagen.



Silver pyx
designed by
Rev. Thomas W. Phelan
and made by
Robert Clare.
Letters engraved by
John G. Gove;
the fish by
M. Louise Reggio.



whether commercial or aesthetic — which makes of the artifact not a thing in its own right, but merely the source of a certain impression.

Here again, unfortunately, the Lambert-Rucki crucifix reveals itself as a product of secular art. If it were the idea of Christ in a body of bronze, that body would have been finished in those parts that do not appear as well as in those that do. The nails would have been real bronze nails, and the attachment of the corpus by them would have been a real attachment. This would have been quite as easy. But no. The nails are nails of appearance only, heads without any function other than visual effect. The real attachments are two rough iron pins one in the left heel and one in the back. The back itself is left with the unfinished of commercial callousness. What

does not show does not matter. Love has not given Christ a body of bronze. Other motives have shaped bronze to an appearance of his body. The difference between the two points of view is polar.

I am sorry to make these criticisms of a piece of work which is from other points of view so fine. For the wholly secular mind, they are meaningless. For the wholly sacred mind, they are unnecessary. But for those of us who waver in a sort of dream of coëxistence between one viewpoint and the other, they may be of real use. For the Catholic Art Association is not, as I understand the matter, dedicated to restoring to Christ the arts as they now are, but in correcting their abnormalities so that they may be not unworthily restored, and we, the artists, made worthy of His promises.

— *Graham Carey*

A PYX

The central idea and purpose of a pyx is reflected in the history of its name. The Latin words, *pyxis* and *buxus*, meaning respectively a box, and a box-tree and its wood (formerly used for the making of boxes) come from the Greek PUXIS and PUXOS with the same meanings.

But the design of too many pyxes suggests a watch-case rather than a box, and the use of this shape, derived as it is from so different a function, is inappropriate to a Eucharistic vessel, and robs it of much of its sacred character.

So, when it came time for me to get a pyx for my ministry in the diocesan priesthood, I decided to begin from the beginning and try to design a pyx that would be practical for use, and at the same time expressive of its noble mission. The central idea was that of a box, and I visualized a shape something like that of a drugstore pill box.

The photographs show how this idea and this image were materialized. This pyx is a flat cylinder of silver $1\frac{7}{8}$ inches in diameter and $11/16$ inches high. The

inside of this box is lined with gold, and the bottom rises up in the middle to facilitate the handling of the Sacred Hosts. The cover is hinged to open to a 90 degree angle, as shown in the photograph. By holding the open pyx by the cover, the Sacrament can be easily administered. It is held closed at other times by a little hasp that fits securely over a small knob. This pyx easily holds as many as ten particles — enough for the ordinary parish communion call day.

To emphasize the noble use to which this little box is dedicated, I decided to decorate the cover with a line from the tombstone document of Pectorius, an early Bishop of Autun: SOTEROS AGION MELIEDEA LAMBANE BROSIN, or "Receive the honeyed food of the Saviour of the holy ones." And because this document uses the ICHTHUS ACTROSTICON, so frequently, and because the ICHTHUS is doubly indicative of the contents of the sacred box, I had the Fish displayed in the middle of the inscription.

— *Rev. Thomas W. Phelan*

PAPAL DIRECTIVES ON ART

During the Workshop on Creative Art at the Catholic University in 1954, Father Lauck interpreted various encyclicals and public addresses of Pope Pius XII, and outlined the requirements of the Sacred Congregation for the guidance of Catholic artists and art teachers. His analysis resolved itself into six questions about fundamental issues. We reprint these questions and Father Lauck's answers to them. The full text, "The Art Program of Pope Pius XII," will appear in the Proceedings of the Workshop to be published by the University.

By The Rev. Anthony Lauck, C.S.C.

ARE THERE ANY WORKS OF ART WHICH ARE FORBIDDEN TO BE USED IN THE CHURCH?

First of all, the Sacred Office frowns upon that art which would diminish or disturb the piety and devotion of the faithful. Such a work of art upsets the very purpose for which it is placed in church, "to foster the faith and piety of those who gather to pray." But we must take care in deciding whether a given image does, in fact, disturb piety or diminish devotion. One member of the faithful may walk into a church and, for the first time, be confronted with an image having strong, vigorous lineaments, and he may undergo a visual jolt. He may be drawn to look at the image again and again, because there is some substance to it, but this need not, necessarily, diminish his devotion. Every new addition to a church attracts *some* attention. A good work of art will attract *more* attention.

Many claim that our standard church-goods images inspire more devotion than any others. Is it not, rather, the bright colors, rich materials, or sweet expressions that we confuse with piety? For years we have prayed before those standard images. The appeal of the prayers recited, the reverence we have felt as a result of our union with the faithful gathered together, our growing appreciation of the persons or events depicted — we have come to associate these things with those old familiar images. And there is probably more sentiment than sense in our appraisal of their

artistic value as stimulants to piety. A well renowned artist once told me that he had been influenced to leave the Church because of its careless attitude toward art, as reflected in cheap holy pictures, paintings and sculpture.

A word about custom. The Sacred Office must always generalize instructions insofar as they concern local custom. What is acceptable in one part of the world may be rejected in another. African savages, for instance, have wrought and carved handsome sculpture for use in their jungle chapels. Their work is perfectly normal and is accepted without question. Yet, due to custom, these things could not be placed in a chapel in Washington, D. C. In the matter of custom and habit, one man's meat is another man's poison.

THE SACRED OFFICE REJECTS "DISTORTED" OR "CONFUSED

CONCEPTIONS." WHAT DOES THIS MEAN? An artist might be said to have a confused or disordered conception of our Lord if he represented him as a man of sixty with a long beard or a bald head. To limn some saint in such vague outlines or with so little similarity to human proportions that he could scarcely be distinguished from a plant or animal, is, without doubt, indication of a confused conception. However, it is possible that a well organized arrangement of geometric lines could dramatically express the spirit or the idea behind some saint. But the distinction has to be made between representation of persons, and that of their characteristics.

To distort means to twist something

out of its normal shape or pervert its true meaning.

Several months before the *Instruction* was promulgated, the Holy Father gave an address to a group of Italian artists who visited the Vatican. In his address he referred to four great works of art. He mentioned by name the mosaics of Rome and Ravenna, the bronze and stone façade of Orvieto, the windows of Chartres, and the bronze doors of Ghiberti in Florence. The Holy Father called these works "artistic masterpieces," "Bibles of the people." We can assume that they are all acceptable as sacred art. And yet, if we examine them carefully, we shall find in them some degree of distortion. Perhaps distortion is most evident in the windows of Chartres, where proportions are sacrificed to achieve rhythmic line and balanced pattern. Anatomical proportions give way to geometric ones in the blaze of radiant, glowing color. These marvelous windows seem not so much to bring light through them, as to gleam with a light of their own.

We may conclude that a certain amount of distortion is permitted if it is *meaningful*.

THE SACRED CONGREGATION OBJECTS TO WORKS OF ART THAT ARE "UNUSUAL." HOW CAN THE UNUSUAL BE DISTINGUISHED FROM THE NEW, ORIGINAL CONCEPTIONS OF A GIVEN SUBJECT?

Every original work of art is unusual in the sense that it is different in idea, style, or treatment from any other work of art. Surely that cannot be the proper interpretation of the word "unusual" in the directive. Rather, it must mean odd, or bizarre, or unpleasantly eccentric, or incongruous, foreign to our sense of the sacred in art.

The word "unusual" is quoted from an earlier directive by Pope Urban VIII. During the reign of this Pope, something quite new was added to St. Peter's in Rome: Lorenzo Bernini's canopy over the main

altar, done in the baroque style.

An original work is one which is first in order of existence. An original work is new, not copied or imitated. It is creative and inventive in treatment. It is the unique, personal thought of an artist translated into new, individual forms. Originality is not something to be avoided. If a painting is not original, it is not a work of art. And art, sacred art, is the subject about which the Holy Office purports to speak.

IN WHAT WAY CAN A WORK OF ART NOT BE IN HARMONY WITH ECCLESIASTICAL TRADITION?

A work of art may disagree or be discordant with tradition in several ways. For example, an image of our Lord in the habit of a particular religious order is forbidden. So is any image of the Virgin garbed in the vestments of a priest, or an image of the Holy Ghost in human form. This type of forbidden art is described in Canon 1279 of the Code, as a kind which is not in accord with accepted usage in the Church, or which conveys an idea that is dogmatically false or which allows false interpretation.

HAS THE HOLY OFFICE DECLARED ANY SPECIFIC WORKS OF ART TO BE PARTICULARLY SUITED (OR UNSUITED) FOR USE IN THE CHURCH?

Above specific works of art, it seems that the Holy Office preferred not to exercise judgment officially. This is wise. The hand-carved statue which a Christian community in the Belgian Congo accepts, may not be tolerated in the diocese of Fort Wayne. Among the most abstract and least imitative arts in the world is African art: sculpture such as we find in the Belgian Congo. After a recent exposition of Congolese art, the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda wrote a letter of congratulation to the Apostolic Delegate of the Belgian Congo. In this letter, the Cardinal wrote,

The Catholic Church is neither Belgian, nor French, nor English, nor Italian, nor American, but Catholic. She is Belgian

in Belgium, French in France, English in England. In the Congo, she must be Congolese. In the construction of sacred edifices and in the making of articles of devotion, she must carefully take into account the lines, colors and other elements of Congolese art.¹

Again, on the occasion of receiving a gift for His Holiness, Pius XI, of sacred pictures done in the bright, linear Japanese style, the Cardinal Prefect wrote to the Apostolic Delegate there:

An art which is at once thoroughly Catholic and distinctly national will be a concrete and effective proof that the Church is not identified with or bound to any particular form of culture, but that she welcomes whatever she finds that is good and beautiful in all peoples.²

ARE THERE ANY POSITIVE RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH CAN SERVE AS A GUIDE TO ARTISTS AND TO THOSE WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR SELECTION AND PURCHASE OF OBJECTS TO BE USED IN THE CHURCH?

We quote a sentence from the *Instruction* which heartens the true artist:

Open wide the portals and tender sincere welcome to every good and progressive development of the approved and venerable traditions, which in so many centuries of Christian life, in such diversity of circumstances and of social and ethnic conditions, have given stupendous proof of their inexhaustible capacity of inspiring new and beautiful forms, as often as

they were investigated, or studied and cultivated under the twofold light of genius and faith.

In these words, the Holy Office voice accord with many artists of our day who are speaking in a modern idiom, who are using the new language of contemporary art to express their ideas in paint or stone. There is an even more encouraging statement on this point, in the Encyclical Letter of Pope Pius XII on Sacred Liturgy, promulgated in 1947:

It is eminently fitting that the art of our times have a free opportunity to serve the sacred edifices and sacred rites with due reverence and with due honor; so that it, too, may add its voice to the magnificent hymn of glory which men of high talent have sung throughout the passing centuries of the Catholic faith.

Furthermore, paragraph 22 of the Directive reads:

Painting, sculpture and architecture should be entrusted for their execution only to men who are outstanding for their technique, and who are capable of expressing sincere faith and piety, which is the purpose of any sacred art.

Every age has its good voices and its own voices. And every age has its own hymns to sing, with a beauty and a character of its own.

¹S. C. Prop. Fid., Letter, 14 Dec., 1936 Sylloge, N. 103.

²S. C. Prop. Fid., Letter, 1 June, 1935 Sylloge N. 193.

THE COLLEGE AND SEMINARY NEWSLETTER is making advances this year, with the added attraction of silk-screened covers. This new feature gives the subscribers an opportunity to see the work of the artists in the various art departments of the colleges and seminaries publishing the *Newsletter* each month. In the current year, the *Newsletter* has been issued from the College of Mount St. Joseph-on-the-Ohio, St. Vincent College, Latrobe, Pa., and from Barat College, Lake Forest, Illinois. Future issues are scheduled from Immaculate Heart College, Los Angeles, California, the Cistercian Seminary, Okau-
chee, Wisconsin, the College of St. Mary-

of-the-Springs, Columbus, Ohio, Cardinal Stritch College, Milwaukee, Wisconsin and St. Catherine College, St. Joseph, Minnesota.

Subscriptions to the *Newsletter* may be had for \$1.00 by writing to Sister Augusta S.C., College of Mount St. Joseph-on-the-Ohio, Mount St. Joseph, Ohio.

A C.A.A. LECTURE SERVICE has been requested. Members of the Association who are willing to lecture on art in their immediate vicinity or elsewhere, are asked to write to Sister Esther (St. Mary-of-the-Woods College, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana) and give lecture topics and fee

THE WOODEN IMAGE

By James Marshall Plumer

Pair of foxes:
guards of Shinto shrine.

*Prof. Emory Collection
Nara, Japan*

FORMING OF IMAGES. Good carving requires imagination. What is imagination but the forming of images in the mind? If one thinks of an angel, one imagines wings. If one thinks of a devil, one thinks of horns. Quite different horns imagined if one thinks of a cow. These and other essential elements according to the character of the object imagined make the whole as the mind conceives it.

THE WOODEN VISION —
Let the image-maker form the images of his mind in wood. If he is adept at carving he should turn out a satisfactory wooden version of the image in his mind. The result will spring from two necessary operations, one mental, the other manual.

THE VISUAL IMAGE IN WOOD. It is of course possible for an object to be carved in wood after an image merely seen by the eye. The two operations in such a case may be described as visual and manual. The hand of the carver copies what the eye sees, and that subtle instrument, the human mind, is hardly called into play at all. The result of this sort of art is the faithful copy of the scale model.

Santos
The Holy Family
New Mexico

Detroit Institute of Arts



Toy horses
whittled by
Miss Lizzie Dowlin,
at the age of 72.
New Hampshire

*Photograph courtesy
Department of Fine Arts
University of Michigan*



THINGS SEEN AND THINGS IMAGINED — Wooden images as we here analyze them, then, are of two categories: solid replicas of things seen and solid replicas of things imagined, the one produced by skill and sight, the other by skill and insight. It is with the latter that peoples of primitive and traditional cultures were concerned.



Gate guardian or
demon exorciser
from Indonesia

*Scott Cole Collection
Northville, Michigan*

ABSTRACTIONS — One needs only to look at typical wood carvings from Africa, Asia, the Pacific or Early America to see that the carvers dealt in abstractions. The word "abstraction" comes from the same root (meaning "to draw") as "tractor," "extraction," and "extract." As extract of vanilla is the actual drawn-out essence of a particular bean, so an abstraction of any idea should be the drawn-out essence of that idea, and should convey the full flavor of it. The conveying of essential meanings was of particular importance in illiterate societies, and meaningless carvings were not to be found until cultural decadence or collapse.

WOODEN REPRESENTATIONS OF MENTAL IMAGES. In well-balanced and integrated societies, whether literate or illiterate, commonly held mental images are to be expected. A wooden image carved by one of their own people is likely to be as close to the common mental image as can be made in wood. It will differ from the mental image primarily because of the nature of wood. And it will vary slightly from one wood to another because of differences in hardness and color and grain. It will even differ within one kind of wood if cut from first or second growth, or if fashioned from a newly-cut tree or from driftwood.

BRINGING THE IMAGE OUT. Beyond characteristics inherent in the material, the image-maker will by his technique inevitably modify the image envisioned. "There it is!" he may exclaim to himself as he beholds it within the log or block. How shall he bring it out for others to see? With metal tools, by whittling away the unwanted portions, or by carving, or by use of hammer and chisel. Or possibly by rubbing down with something rough like coral or shell or sharkskin.



Ancestral Deity,
Igorot,
Philippine Islands

*Mrs. Joseph R. Hayden Collection,
Ann Arbor, Michigan*

Kuan Yin Bodhisattva
Chinese folk image
following 13th or 14th
century prototypes.
Shensi, China

*Photograph courtesy
Department of Fine Arts
University of Michigan*

Some finishing of the object may be needed so that people who look at it will reflect more on the image it represents than on the craftsmanship that went into making it. Polishing or painting will tend to obliterate the tool-marks and to enhance the final product, the first method utilizing the natural beauty of the material, the second concealing it.





Photograph courtesy Department of Fine Arts, University of

Heroes of the Hindu epic: Ramayana. *Left to right:* HANUMAN the "monkey-god" who rescued SITA, the perfect wife of RAMA, the deposed king in guise of hunter, and LAKSHMAN, his brother. Madura, South India.

VIEWING IMAGES IN WOOD. How are we to look at these images of wood that were all made for other peoples? There is no fixed answer. We may respond to the lure of polished surfaces. We may admire the textures, or the colors, or shapes appropriate to wood. We may enjoy the fresh fragrance of one piece or the antique aroma of another. We may yearn to touch them—a right reaction on coming upon an image of the mind made tangible. Ideally, we would react exactly as the image-maker meant his own people to react. Now we would register horror, now amusement, now delight. Occasionally the meaning behind the image may come clear and we may stand in awe of it.

MARIAN YEAR CONVENTION REPORT

Judging from the enthusiasm of the participants, the C.A.A. National Convention, held at St. Mary-of-the-Woods College, November 26-27, was a great success. The most important achievement was the presentation and unanimous acceptance of resolutions concerning the dedication



prayer and Marian promise of members of the Association. It was proposed that a simple ceremony of daily homage to Our Lady be inaugurated and that the *Salve Regina* be sung daily wherever we assemble in our place of work. The dedication prayer was endorsed during the first session and recited publicly at Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. A copy of the prayer and promise, together with the names of those who promised the daily salute to Our Lady, will be sent to the Holy Father as a tribute of our filial devotion. A copy of the dedication prayer and the resolutions were sent to C.A.A. members in the president's pre-convention letter.

The other features of the convention — fine technical demonstrations, talks, and discussions — were intended to show possibilities for renovating Christian art in all fields, to contribute to a renewal of enthusiasm, and to provide opportunities for learning the techniques of working

with new media. There was inspiration and profitable discussion on art in the home, elementary and secondary schools, adult education, the problems of professional and buyer groups, the apostolate, and student interests. One of the most encouraging developments was the interest in training in art and the production of works of art for priests and seminarians. The group presenting this part of the program consisted of priests, seminarians, artists, and interested laymen. They discussed the more urgent problems facing the seminaries in their attempt to carry out the directives of the Holy See regarding training in art.

The final address of the convention was an invitation by Msgr. Thomas J. Quigley, president of the National Catholic Music Educators' Association, for closer collaboration of the two societies in the great work of education in the arts. Msgr. Quigley suggested that this unification of effort would be mutually beneficial to the organizations, and recommended that a committee representing both, be formed to consider the various ways in which this collaboration could be achieved without loss of autonomy to either. The complete text of Msgr. Quigley's convention talk will appear in a forthcoming issue of the *Quarterly*.

At the close of the convention, this matter was referred to Father King, president of the C.A.A., who was unable to be present because of illness.

— Sister Esther, S.P.

Note: A short 16mm color film of the signing of the Marian promise at the convention, may be borrowed from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College Art Department. Some amateur records of the *Salve Regina* are also available (male or female voices; also a tape recording by seminarians (7.5 speed) and another by a group of novices (3.4 speed).

TRAINING THE CHRISTIAN ARTIST

A member of the panel which discussed the problem of training the Catholic artist, during the recent C.A.A. convention at St. Mary-of-the-Woods College, Miss Ann H. Grill here outlines what she considers of basic importance in such training.

By Ann H. Grill

We have been persistent in trying to solve a perennial problem: how to educate the Christian artist. And properly so, for this is a problem important enough to warrant the concern of Christians and artists alike. The present world, which is one of expediency, materialism, and speedy mass production, turns ever new facets to perplex and to delay us.

Unwilling as we are to accept the slogan, "Things must become worse before they can become better," we search deeply for a proper understanding and wise solution to this problem as it confronts us in this second half of the 20th century. It would be naïve of us to presume to find a solution in some surface trick or fancy insertion.

It is my firm belief that a Christian artist must be trained "in spirit and in truth." He must, first of all, be redeemed from the sentimental piety which afflicts so many of us today. He needs to understand the selfish and un-Christian quality inherent in sentimentality. Someone has defined sentimentality as that quality which makes us want to *feel* good rather than *do* good. The Christian artist must learn to face reality, to concern himself with truth in all its aspects and not to limit himself to that one aspect with which he is familiar and which he finds most pleasant.

As a Christian he needs to acquire the spirit of the early Christians which will enable him to accept the challenge to do the impossible through his true love of Christ. He needs to have a religious and artistic background which will enable him to form those objects which *in truth* proclaim his proper respect for the dignity

of human nature and for all of God's creatures.

Furthermore, the artist needs to have a capacity to wonder at, and to delight in, the magnificence of redeemed human nature. This he must learn to do in humility and with awe, remembering that Christ became man for our redemption and hence He must consider man of real significance to Him. Through his important God-given capacities, the artist can then try to grasp the significance of Christ's great love which not only prompted Him to assume our human nature, but also to give to it a share in His divine nature.

These are the depths we must sound if we expect to find a solution to our problem of training the Christian artist adequately. Certainly the artist must realize his dignity as a Christian, a creature made to the image and likeness of God. No one can know accurately the individual image God holds in His mind for each of us, but the artist, because he makes according to an image in his own mind, may understand, by analogy, the importance of fulfilling the image in the mind of God. Throughout his training he must be reminded to respect his job as artist, and to understand how he, in his chosen vocation, fits into God's plan for redeemed mankind.

How completely the Christian artist today fulfills his particular part in the whole scheme of things may depend in great measure on how well we have made him aware of his human dignity, his artistic heritage, and the responsibilities of his vocation (his artistic profession in the light of a vocation). He should know that he educates himself in his own creative acts, by acquiring technical skills, by learning how to use materials, and by patient dis-

cipline of himself. We shall have done much for him if he realizes that his professional integrity requires him to act according to the truth he has learned, and if he realizes how he can fulfill his Christian destiny. If his growth has been in

depth as well as in height, he will continue to wonder at the power of God's gifts in him, which, first of all, allow him to see the problems of his day, and then to solve them creatively to the benefit of redeemed mankind.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE FIRST WRITING BOOK

An English translation and facsimile text of Arrighi's *Operina*, the first manual of the Chancery hand, with Introduction and Notes by John Howard Benson.

New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1955. 96pp., \$2.50.

Why has Arrighi's *Operina*, the first manual of instruction for writing the Chancery hand remained untranslated into English so long? It is considered to be the best, and it is strange that it has been neglected for so many years.

The need for and desirability of such a text has been increasingly apparent. The movement to write not only legibly but beautifully has steadily grown. Arrighi's method offers a sure and simple way to improve on the grade school scripts and gracelessness so apparent in so much of today's handwriting.

The most widely known and used work on writing was Edward Johnston's *Writing, Illuminating and Lettering*, published nearly fifty years ago, and it ran into many editions. It was followed by numerous others — good, bad, and indifferent. Meanwhile Arrighi's authoritative and interesting instruction was available only to those familiar with the Italian of his text, or guidance came to others second or third hand.

The answer to the "Why" is, of course, that more was needed than knowledge of Italian, the work of the Renaissance scribes, and calligraphic ability. Acquaintance with subject and an ability to write in the manner of the period alone, would have missed the standard and accomplish-

ment of *The First Writing Book*. The combination of the practical and intellectual qualities was needed to furnish the answer to our query.

There are those whose reputations rest on their ability to design and cut letters with skill and beauty on wood and stone. There are those famed for calligraphy and for illuminating texts. Some have written competently, and instructed wisely in all these crafts of making true and beautiful the letters of our alphabet. It is rare that all these abilities center in one man. They do, however, in John Howard Benson, who has given us the first English translation of Arrighi's *Operina*, published in Rome in 1522, thus making available the technique and guidance of the famous scribe.

The distinction of Mr. Benson's accomplishments may be judged by the widely-known reputation of The John Stevens Shop, where he and his partners practice all these crafts, and from which, fifteen years ago, he and his associate, Mr. Graham Carey, issued *The Elements of Lettering*, which remains today, the most concise yet comprehensive treatment of the subject.

Mr. Benson's present book is unique. It is actually two books in one — the Arrighi complete writing book, together with an interpretation of that text and its format. It combines excellent reproductions of the pages of the master's instructions, with their counterparts, beautifully written in the same style by his present-day disciple.

Thus, one has both the English translation, and a rare collector's item in facsimile, of one of the best books on handwriting, from a period when writing was an art

to be cultivated and enjoyed, rather than a task to be completed, and that, often carelessly.

Comparing the English with the Italian pages, one recognizes beyond the technical knowledge and ability, the honesty, humility, and patience of the true craftsman, which give us pages that delight the eye and inspire the mind and hand to emulate their calligraphic excellence.

These same virtues echo through the book as Mr. Benson writes of the many trials with page patterns — of his desire to promote better handwriting — and as he explains the methods of Renaissance writing and its decline due to the change in pens and style. He then illustrates the way to a recovery of that former style and beauty — diagramming it for clarity — as all the “whys” and “hows” are carefully and methodically clarified and explained.

John Howard Benson, it seems clear, was really impelled to do this book by his love of and knowledge of true letter forms. It will undoubtedly move many to learn and enjoy good handwriting.

This beautifully designed and well-printed book is an excellent example of the good, the true, and the beautiful. It has already proved its merit by going out of print shortly after the first edition was issued. The second edition, now available, will be warmly welcomed by many who wish to learn how writing can be a source of pleasure — and by the initiate as a high-water mark in calligraphic books.

— George F. Trenholm

THE SCRIPTURES ON THE WAY OF THE CROSS

Abbé Roger Poelman

Bethlehem, Connecticut: Regina Laudis, O.S.B., 1954, 32 pp., \$2.00.

Is 20th century man tongue-tied in expressing his love or sympathy? Is a descent into the perilous chasms of a sublime emotion more than he dare face? Is he inhibited in speaking to those for whom he most cares? And further, is he worse than other men in his stammering? The answer

to these questions would be interesting. I don't know it.

I do know, however, that my own contemporaries can be perplexed about how to talk to God. The impassioned, baroque or romantic language of the last century is not for us. Neither is the learned, less surely, richly developed prose of a Saint Thomas More. Our taste is for an expression pure, bare, stark, darkly primitive, detached, somewhat impersonal.

Nauseated as we have been by a sentimental degeneration of baroque piety, we find fresh air, new life, release, in a book like *The Scriptures on the Way of the Cross*. Not a word do we hear from Father Poelman; he lets the Scriptures speak.

The Scriptures, yes, they are the guide, the sober basis for that 20th century communal language of prayer which our world so desperately seeks.

Many of the Church's liturgical texts of course, from the beginning have been pieced with bits of Scriptures. So Father Poelman is no rash innovator, but rather one of many animated by the same typically 20th century collective inspiration.

Don't let your Lenten Stations become a dead routine. There are, in Father Poelman's book, sufficient Scriptures for each Station so that you need not use all of them, nor the same every day. The nuns of Regina Laudis Monastery set the type by hand, in large, clear lines. In fact, they have outdone themselves to present a sturdy, long-lasting, nicely printed book, a book you can cherish for your private devotions.

One more thing. Because this book is a product of the liturgical and biblical apostolate does not mean it has been planned for public devotion. If it had, it would have been laid out with responses and choruses, and produced in some inexpensive way to make it usable for parish and other public recitations. This is not the case here, but we are dealing instead with a book which is, in the best sense of these words, designed for private meditation.

— Adé de Bethune

OUR COVER DESIGN is the work of Clemens Schmidt, Wiesbaden, Germany, and stands for St. Luke, under the image of the constellation Taurus, with which he has from early Christian times been associated.

C.A.A. EXHIBITIONS of the work of elementary, high school, and college students are available from Sister M. Patrice, F.S.P.A., Viterbo College, LaCrosse, Wisconsin. Schools wishing to be represented in these traveling exhibitions may request information.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

JAMES MARSHALL PLUMER, A.M., is Associate Professor of Far Eastern Art, University of Michigan.

GEORGE TRENHOLM is an eminent professional typographer of Boston.

GRAHAM CAREY is one of the original members and an advisor to the Catholic Art Association.

REV. ANTHONY LAUCK, C.S.C., teaches sculpture in the art department of Notre Dame University.

REV. THOMAS PHELAN is curate of St. Lawrence Church, Troy, N. Y.

ADÉ DE BETHUNE is a free lance artist and manager of the St. Leo Shop, Newport, Rhode Island.

SISTER ESTHER, S.P., is head of the art department of St. Mary-of-the Woods College, Indiana.

ANN H. GRILL is head of the art department of Barat College, Lake Forest, Illinois.

